

Implementation Science

Implementation science is the use of activities designed to put into practice interventions and strategies to achieve changes in practice in schools and improve outcomes. Exceptional Student Services (ESS) supports the use of implementation science to ensure that local education agencies (LEAs) carry out the activities of the Action Plans they develop. These Action Plans are developed by each Data Action Team (DAT) during the Examining Data to Improve Student Achievement (EDISA) process.

LEAs will receive support from their assigned program specialist and also have the assistance of an implementation specialist beginning in the second year of the EDISA process and continuing throughout full implementation of the Action Plan. The implementation specialist will collaborate with the LEA and the assigned program specialist to ensure that the Action Plan developed aligns with the implementation science frameworks.

This process will assist with bridging the gap between research on evidence-based practices and application of these practices to sustainable innovations or interventions. ESS staff will conduct frequent visits and complete quarterly reports to monitor the progress schools make in implementing Action Plans with fidelity. Implementation specialists will use implementation science frameworks in a process that includes activities to effect systems change. Activities of the specialists might include providing technical assistance, presenting professional development, assisting with data analysis, and coaching. District staff will use evidence-based practices as a means of building and sustaining the district's capacity to improve student outcomes.

Implementation science refers to strategies for combining evidence-based interventions with effective implementation and using supports to lead to positive outcomes for students. Five implementation frameworks organize the structure for planning, implementing, and evaluating the effectiveness of an innovation or practice.

The process of planning and implementing interventions takes approximately two to four years to achieve well-developed outcomes, sustainable results, and lasting change

on a systemic level. Educators' competence and confidence to implement practices are key components. The LEA uses data to make decisions and to monitor progress

Implementation drivers explain how educators should use effective practices to support children and families and how organizations should support teachers and staff to implement practices with fidelity (Fixsen et al., 2013).

Implementation teams consist of members who have knowledge of implementation science, experience using data, and have a commitment to improving outcomes. These teams assist with obtaining "buy-in" from other members of the organization, check for fidelity measures, examine capacity for sustainability, and make connections with external systems. Implementation science provides a link between an effective strategy and making the practice sustainable.

Fixsen, D.L., Blase, K., Metz, A., & Van Dyke, M. (2013). Statewide implementation of evidence-based programs. *Exceptional Children*, 79(2), 213–230.